



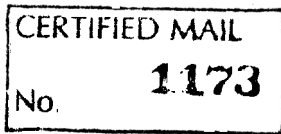
United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MONTANA STATE OFFICE
222 NORTH 32ND STREET
P.O. BOX 36800
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59107-6800



IN REPLY TO:

✓ SDR-922-91-06
3165.3 (922.L)



March 29, 1991

RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

CERTIFIED-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

DECISION

Mr. Frank W. Rives
2030 Kensington Avenue
Missoula, Montana 59801

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SDR No. 922-91-06

AFFIRMED

Frank W. Rives "appellant" has requested a State Director Review (SDR) of the March 8, 1991, decision of the Great Fall Resource Area (GFRA), Area Manager, approving the Fina Oil and Chemical Company (Fina) application for permit to drill (APD). The request was dated March 25, 1991, and was timely received on March 26, 1991 (Enclosure 1).

The site for the proposed Federal South Glacier No. 1-26 well is located in the SE~~1~~⁴ sec. 26, T. 30 N., R. 13 W., PMM, Glacier County, Montana. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared to assess the probable environmental impacts of drilling this well and the Chevron well, located in the SW~~1~~⁴ of sec. 35, T. 29 N., R. 12 W., PMM, Pondera County, Montana, which is approximately 10 miles to the northwest. The final EIS was completed in November 27, 1990. The Record of Decision (ROD) on the Fina well was issued February 19, 1991.

The appellant states that the drilling of the well is unnecessary, unwarranted, and will damage the environment and/or human health. It was also argued that the proposed Fina well will cause unacceptable risks to surface and ground water quality and quantity, degrade fish and wildlife habitats, and expose the area's surface water to increased sedimentation and possible toxic pollution.

This SDR only addresses the issues related to the drilling plan. A copy of this appeal has been forwarded to the U.S. Forest Service, Regional Forester, to address the surface-related issues.

Chapters III and IV of the final EIS discuss the procedures that will be applied to protect the ground water sources in the area. Chapter III-6 of the final EIS and the APD addresses the casing program and the preventive measures that will be employed to prevent the contamination of ground waters.

The casing program is comprised of conductor pipe which is placed into the ground and cemented in place. The conductor pipe keeps the surface soil from sloughing into the well hole. Surface casing is then set and cemented in the hole by pumping cement between the surface casing and the hole wall. Surface casing acts as a safety device to protect fresh water zones from drilling fluid contamination. The intermediate casing prevents the flow of fresh water into the wellbore and, conversely, prevents drilling fluids from infiltrating porous formations with low internal pressures. The casing also prevents mixing waters from different formations where water within the formations are in differing quality.

The appellant also has some concerns regarding "blow-outs" of the well. Chapter III-6 of the final EIS and the Fina APD addresses the preventive measures required to avoid "blow-outs." If high pressure zones are encountered that cannot be controlled with mud additives, the blowout preventers can be closed to effectively seal the well.

The issues which you identify were fully addressed in the final EIS and the Fina APD. Your allegations are not substantiated by any specific information that demonstrates that the APD should not have been approved by the GFRA.

We affirm the GFRA Area Manager's decision approving the drilling plan of the Fina APD. Also, your request for a stay on the drilling of the well is denied.

This Decision may be appealed to the Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR 4.400 and the enclosed Form 1842-1 (Enclosure 2). If an appeal is taken, a Notice of Appeal must be filed in this office at the aforementioned address within 30 days from receipt of this Decision. A copy of the Notice of Appeal and of any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served on the Office of the Solicitor at the address shown on Form 1842-1. It is also requested that a copy of any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs be sent to this office. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.



Donald L. Gilchrist
Deputy State Director
Division of Mineral Resources

2 Enclosures

- 1-Frank W. Rives letter dated March 25, 1991 (3 pp)
- 2-Form 1842-1 (1 p)

cc: (w/o encls.)
DM, Lewistown
AM, Great Falls